1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

517 521 562 some pulling on their stubby little pipes and watching the men. As the men smoke, they may pass the pipe from mouth to mouth, but not so the women.

517 276 Tobacco (*akaya*) is a great vehicle for sociability whether in the pipe or in the form of snuff. 'Snuffing is held to clear the head, to clarify the thought, to enlighten the eyes, to sharpen the hearing, and comfort the heart.'[1] 'Taking a pinch of snuff, between the forefinger and the thumb, is unknown . . . and would be considered . . . very unsatisfactory. . . . They pour about a teaspoonful into the palm of the hand, and burying their . . . nostrils in the peppery mixture snort it up loudly, aided by a rotary motion of the half-closed hand.'[2]

● 273 Beer (*ocimbombo*) is of even greater importance. Its place has long been threatened by such drinks as the stronger beer made from emmer wheat (*ekundi*), mead (*ingundu* and *ocasa*), and [177] imported rum. Within the past thirty or forty years the Ovimbundu have themselves learned to distil rum (*okacipembe*) from sweet potatoes, sugar-cane, pumpkins, &c., and although the industry is illegal, it has grown to great proportions and nothing now seems able to stop it. It is the widespread use of this strong drink, with its concomitant evils, which is to-day the greatest enemy of the social life.

535 The dance is probably the most important element in the social life of the village. The Ovimbundu have many different dances and they dance on every occasion and on the slightest provocation. I have collected thirty songs to accompany dances. About three-fourths of them are sometimes used at funerals or at other ceremonial occasions, some of them are for more frivolous purposes, and most of those which are used for ceremonies are used at other times also. It is not for nothing that an Umbundu equivalent of [338] the proverb 'Strike while the iron is hot', runs as follows:

Nda wa mõlã oñoma, piluka:
When you see a drum, dance:
Oñoma ka yi muĩwã luvali.
A drum may not be seen twice.

During one of my visits to Ngendo there was an important funeral with much dancing at Ndumba, just across the valley. At

[1] Tucker, *Drums in the Darkness* (Toronto and New York; Doran, 1927), p. 38.
[2] Monteiro, *Angola and the River Congo*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1875), vol. ii, p. 271.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

influences. The stock to which the common people belong were wearers of skins, which is true of many of them to the present time. The people from whom the ruling houses came have a highly developed weaving industry. The 'Ngangela' neighbours, who have also contributed elements to the racial make-up of the Ovimbundu, make and use bark-cloth. The Ovimbundu evidently gave up the use of skins for clothing more than a hundred years ago.[1] This fact, and the additional one that they never developed weaving or bark-cloth industries, was probably due to their early and widespread use of trade-cloth. Rum came with the slave-trade from Brazil. They were almost inseparable. The ships which fetched the slaves came laden with rum distilled in Brazil. The rum was used in buying the slaves, and much more of it was consumed by Ovimbundu—traders, chiefs, and retainers—than by the interior people. Thus, while the slave-trade had such a disruptive influence in the life of the interior tribes, rum did much to corrupt the Ovimbundu. Native tradition[2] and the accounts of early travellers agree on this point. Rum continued to come from Brazil and from other countries or oversea colonies all through this early period, but import was partly supplanted by distillation at the coast, and this process was soon learned by the Ovimbundu themselves.

The part which the Umbundu trade had in spreading the goods and uses of the outside world is a fascinating subject and one which would repay study. Ethnographical and historical knowledge of Central Africa is not yet so extensive or precise that the dates and places of these movements can be plotted with certainty. Professor C. M. Doke records that Nkumine, who ruled the Lamba sometime before 1840, sold many of his people 'as slaves to the Mbundu traders from the West Coast for calico, guns, and powder'.[3] It is important to remember that throughout this period the Ovimbundu were for all this part of Africa the chief intermediaries in the slave-trade. These activities affected the ultimate

[1] See Magyar, *passim*.

[2] A Ngalangi tradition says that from the time of King Ndumba II (*c.* 1840) rum was so plentiful that it was poured into troughs, whence it was lapped up by all—men, women, and children. A constant difficulty encountered by the early missionaries was the objection of chiefs and their counsellors to the missionaries' refusal to give liberal presents of rum, as did all the traders.

[3] C. M. Doke, *The Lambas of Northern Rhodesia* (London: Harrap, 1931), pp. 36, 37.

233 The cattle herd obtains most of its food by grazing, but in the dry season the grass withers. Childs states[1] that "Herding has been a [609] function of the sister's son, and even now there is a reluctance on the part of the boys to herd for their fathers."

235 462 [844] Chickens are owned and looked after by both men and women, but other animals only by men. Boys may have small stock of their own, and a boy's economic independence most frequently begins with his owning a chicken.

231 Hambly states that goats are more common than any other animal, and that every family has one or more. These animals are not fed or watered, but are allowed to wander to find their own sustenance. Goats are not milked. Young males are castrated. The goat is frequently used in sacrifices. Sheep also are allowed to find their own food; the males are not castrated. Pigs are cared for comparatively carefully, receiving water and a daily supply of sweet potatoes and their leaves, together with some corn. Male pigs are castrated.[2]

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[439] Beeswax was an important item of trade in the caravan days, and is still sold to Portuguese traders' stores, where it is massed into large rectangular cakes for export. Honey is eaten alone or with manioc, and [262] a fermented beer called *ochasa* is made by adding honey to corn-beer. [273] Fibre strainers are used for cleaning the wax, and large shallow baskets [252] are employed for drying the honey in the sun.

Large cylindrical hives, which are private property, are placed high in the trees. These are made by removing a cylinder of bark and lashing the halves together with strands of bark, forming a hive which has a diameter of one foot.

In Elende honey is removed from the hives during the months of August and December. One man ascends the tree in order to lower the hive with a long rope of bark or plaited fibre, while beneath the tree men are prepared to take the hive, which is opened over a smoky fire.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

326 782 *Smithing.* The profession of blacksmith or *ocivinda* is an important one, and, like hunting and divining, is sacred and is entered with special ritual. Often, but not always, these three professions are passed on by inheritance. For smithing two years' apprenticeship to a member of the profession is necessary, and is usually entered upon at the age of eighteen. At the end of this period the master examines his pupil, and makes tools for him, especially the heavy hammer or *onjundo* which is regarded as symbolic of his craft. For the inauguration ceremony the boy provides four chickens (2 male, 2 female), a dog, and a goat; the blood of these animals is sprinkled on his tools, and their flesh is eaten at a feast [553] attended by the villagers. Throughout the procedure the boy remains standing on the small anvil. Finally he is asked to choose his professional name; he then steps down from the anvil a qualified blacksmith.

(1) Childs, 1949, p.109. (2) Hambly, op.cit., p.154.
(3) Hambly, (4) 1934.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

the tree in order to lower the hive with a long rope of bark or plaited fiber, while beneath the tree men are prepared to take the hive, which is opened over a smoky fire. The men wear no protection, consequently they are badly stung. Boys are encouraged to help, and those who run away receive no honey. Honey may be eaten alone or with manioc. No drink is made from honey only, but ochasa is the name given to beer with honey in it. *Ovingundu* is a drink made from pounded corn which has been soaked in water to which a little honey has been added. The drink is allowed to remain untouched over night; thus it becomes sweet and is mildly intoxicating. 231 263 273

Wax is a very important item of trade. In the remote places natives bring to small trading posts balls of wax which are about two pounds in weight. These in former days were a standard of exchange in terms of which other values could be measured. These balls of wax are made into large cakes for foreign export. In the Esele country a fiber strainer is used for cleaning the wax. Honey is sometimes dried in very large baskets which are three feet in diameter and two inches deep. These baskets were not observed among the Ovimbundu, but they are used in the region of Cassanga in southern Angola. The honey of wild bees when eaten in the comb is palatable; it would be more so if one could disregard the presence of numerous dead bees. 439 257 [436]

The bow is the chief weapon of the hunter. The release of the arrow is made with the index and middle fingers (Plate XXXIX, Fig. 1). I have observed this method among the Ovimbundu of the Benguela Highlands, in the region of Kipungo, in the far south among the Vakuanyama, and among the Vasele of the Novo Redondo hinterland. Arrows differ considerably in pattern as the illustrations show (Plate XVII, Figs. 1-9); the Ovimbundu have arrow-points of excellent workmanship. The manufacture of these arrow-points is one of the most skilled occupations of the blacksmith. Each man makes his own shafts and feathers them. The arrows of the Vasele have leaf-shaped iron points; so also have those used by the Vakuanyama. 411 171 224 [326]

Among the Ovimbundu are specialists who make bows from elastic woods called *usia* and *osambia*. The bow itself is *ohonji* and the arrow is *usongo*. At the third shot I saw a young Ocimbundu boy split a cane which was placed upright at a distance of thirty-three feet. The throwing club (*ohunya*) is used for killing small game such as hares. [463]

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

The flesh of goats, sheep, and pigs might be more frequently used if these animals were bred and cared for under some system of animal husbandry. The Ovimbundu are familiar with the preservation of meat by smoking and drying it, because flesh of animals killed in the chase is sometimes preserved in this way by hunters, yet the method is not widely and constantly applied in order to assure a regular supply of meat.

Failure to utilize the milk of cattle and goats is another example of the neglect of useful commodities. The Vacilenge, who are near neighbors of the Ovimbundu, milk their cows as do the Ovimbundu themselves in some districts, though the practice is by no means general. Even where cows are milked, butter and cheese are not made, though the Ovimbundu know of the process, which is practised by the Vakuanyama of southern Angola.

There are three kinds of beer. *Ocisangua* is a sweet beer which even children may drink because it is not intoxicating. Water is heated slowly in the pot but not boiled; meanwhile meal of Kafir corn or maize is added. Pounded sweet potato is strained in such a way that the liquid part goes into the beer pot; the residual mush is given to pigs. After the beer has cooled out of doors, it is transferred to a large gourd and allowed to stand over night. Next day it is considered a fit drink to consume or to offer to visitors (Plate XXIII, Fig. 3).

The making of an intoxicating beer *ekundi* proceeds as for *ocisangua*, but instead of adding strained liquid from sweet potatoes a root called *ombundi* is included in the brew. The large pot containing this beer is covered tightly and allowed to stand untouched for twenty-four hours, at the end of which time it is a potent drink. It is important to note that the corn is allowed to sprout in the ground before it is made into the infusion to which the root *ombundi* is added.

Ocimbombo is a strongly intoxicating drink. In order to prepare this brew, corn is soaked for a week; then it is left in the ground for the same length of time until it has germinated. It is then pounded on the rocks and placed in large pots filled with water to which sweet meal of corn is added. Simmering over the fire is continued for two days with constant stirring. This brew differs from *ekundi* in the longer germination of the corn and the longer period of simmering. On the fourth day after the simmering is completed the drink is said to be ready for consumption. If the people have honey, they add some to the brew on the third day of standing. My inform-

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

273 ant said, "Sometimes a man who has drunk this beer will sleep on the ground all day and say nothing."

263 438 Salt is a welcome gift in all parts of Angola. Native tribes appreciate its culinary value but show no eagerness to barter for the commodity. At the present time salt is sold in every trader's store, but in earlier times the substance had to be obtained along caravan routes from the coast and was therefore more highly prized than it is today.

317 [231] The Ovimbundu realize the value of salt in the diet of cattle; therefore the animals are occasionally driven to a salt lick in the hills. The Ovimbundu do not use this salt for their own diet, possibly because the salt enjoyed by the cattle is some form of potash and not sodium chloride.

[171] The Vachokue extract salt from the leaves of a river plant by burning it to ashes which are soaked and strained. This is a common African method, but I did not hear of it among the Ovimbundu. The probability is that the Ovimbundu have always obtained salt from the coast.

372 In connection with cooking and brewing beer, methods of making fire are of importance.

Matches are coming into use among the Ovimbundu, but the necessity for them is not great as the hearth fire is not extinguished.

[354] In the center of each hut is a fireplace made of three hearth-stones over which logs of wood are placed with their ends in the fire which is kept alight by pushing the logs forward from time to time. A blaze is made by breaking off bark from the logs, placing it on the center of the fire and blowing. Fire is carried from one place to another by conveying a smoldering log. In the Esele country boys may be seen setting off at dawn to scare birds in the corn field, each carrying fire with him.

Usually the children or some other members of the family sleep on mats close to the fire, which requires no attention other than a pushing forward of the logs.

372 171 The Vasele make fire by the twirling method, and at Ngalangi the same procedure was witnessed. In the twirling method two different kinds of wood are used, soft wood for the base and hard wood for the twirling stick. The twirler used at Ngalangi was a piece of cane into the end of which a piece of hard white wood was secured by binding. Ngonga, my interpreter and informant, thinks that any man of the Ovimbundu could make fire by the twirling method if the necessity arose, but the performance witnessed at Ngalangi led me to doubt the truth of this statement. The operator

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
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maize from these beds is for home consumption, and it comes at a time when maize supplies are running low, and some people have to rely on manioc. The *ombanda* type is sown in September and early October. Then the main fields (*ovapya*, plural of *epya*) are sown in October and November, and only after this is maize sown in the gardens round the houses. In December and January the people are busy hoeing the fields and in February the sowing of beans takes place, continuing into March. This is followed by the harvesting of the gardens in the village, and by the gathering of the maize in the fields, the maize then being placed in field huts to dry. This takes place in March and April, and with its ending the dry season has come.

The dry season is the time for travelling to see relatives and for getting married, since the burden of work is much reduced. May is a good time to clear the bush and then and in later months there is time to build houses. During the dry season there was much more chance of finding people at home, and there were far more festive occasions. This is also a time when men and women can practise crafts such as basketry, fish-trap making, pottery, and so on. In July, the maize dried in the field hut is pounded and brought back to the village, whence it is taken to the traders for sale. The pounding and carrying is often the work of parties of friends and relatives who are rewarded with beer. Occasionally somebody's maize is collected like this well into September, but most people finish in August.

By August the grass has grown very high, and the firing of it is the beginning of large-scale hunts in which men and boys from several villages may join together. Hunts may be undertaken by individuals or by groups at other times of the year either as a hobby or to kill a destructive wild pig (in which case the hunt will be undertaken by a group of people). September is a good month for fishing. The fire has cleared the stream valleys which can now be sown, thus starting off the year's cycle again.

There is no shortage of land, and hence questions of land rights seldom come up in social relations. A village headman has no rights over land outside his village, and even within a village there are strips of bush from which a new garden can be cut. Land is very occasionally sold. For instance a man return-

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
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pass[1] and was sent to contract labour. The *chefe* apparently informed his employer that he could get other carpenters from the post.

Paulo, then acting in his official capacity as elder of the school, had intervened in a projected marriage in which Guilherme had received the bridewealth. Guilherme, acting in his official capacity, had attacked Paulo's wife's brothers Francisco and Pedro. The dispute had now been brought within the sphere of the mission (as represented by the priest Antonio Pires) and of the administration which had ordered the recruitment of the two men. The conflict between Guilherme and Paulo was now to widen out to include several other people.

On the 21st January the strain between Guilherme and Paulo showed itself again in violent quarrelling, from which I learnt about the broken engagement of Anna. Paulo said that he would refer the matter to Antonio Pires when the priest came back.

On the morning of the 24th the question was brought before Antonio Pires, the catechist Pedro Chiquete Santos (35), Paulo, and Guilherme all speaking in turn. Then other people raised their grievances. Sapapula declared that Guilherme was the enemy of everybody in the village. A man called Kasosi (7), a sister's son of Wasuka (15), stepped forward to claim that Guilherme had attacked him and injured him. Apparently Guilherme, while having illicit rum in his own house, had beaten up Kasosi for possessing rum. Both Maria, Paulo's wife, and Nahoka, Sapapula's wife, joined in the argument. The only man who seemed in any way favourable to Guilherme was Kapapelo (see List II, p. 55), a mother's brother of his, who was also a 'brother' of Lusase (see List II, p. 55). Antonio Pires came down heavily against Guilherme, at which the latter declared that he owed obedience only to the post and ran off.

Towards the end of the argument Luciano (the former fiancé of Anna) and Jeremias (the Protestant catechist from Simbwyikoka) came to the priest to ask for the repayment of the bridewealth.

On the 25th Lusase, the chief of Gumba, happened to visit

[1] The legal obligation for natives to possess passes is not enforced with the zeal which applies in South Africa.